



City of Littleton

Meeting Agenda

Planning Commission

Monday, June 22, 2020

6:30 PM

Virtual Study Session - (Joint with Historical Preservation Board)

Viewing Options for Virtual Meetings:

Due to COVID-19, the City of Littleton is providing virtual coverage of Planning Commission meetings to protect the health of citizens, board members, staff, and guests. Meetings will not be held at the Littleton Center until further notice.

While there is no opportunity for citizen engagement or participation during study sessions, options are available to view or listen to the meeting. To view study sessions, the following options are available: watch the live telecast on Comcast or Century Link Channel 8, live on Facebook (www.Facebook.com/CityofLittleton), or visit www.littletongov.org/channel8 to watch the live stream on the city's website. To listen to the meeting on your phone, dial **669-900-6833** and, when prompted, enter Webinar ID **977 8469 3927**.

Please contact the City Clerk's Office at **303-795-3780** with any questions.

1. Study Session Topics

- a) [ID# 20-165](#) Additional discussion on the historic character of downtown Littleton

Attachments: [1. Downtown Character Exercise 1 Consolidated Results](#)

2. Adjournment

The public is invited to attend all regular meetings or study sessions of the City Council or any city Authority, Board or Commission. **Currently, all city buildings are closed to the public and meetings are being conducted virtually.**



Staff Communication

File #: ID# 20-165, **Version:** 2

Agenda Date: 06/22/2020

Subject:

Additional discussion on the historic character of downtown Littleton

Prepared by: Andrea Mimnaugh, AICP, Senior Planner
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BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE:

At the May 11, 2020 joint study session of the Historical Preservation Board and Planning Commission, results of the first downtown character exercise were presented for discussion. The exercise asked participants about their impressions of the historic character of Main and Alamo streets. The consolidated responses are included in this communication as Attachment 1.

The joint study session on June 22 is an opportunity review and discuss results from the second character exercise. This exercise occurred during the first half of June and consisted of a series of small-group tours of Main and Alamo Streets were held to investigate what contributes to historic character, what detracts from it, and what non-historic elements can co-exist with it. Participants were given worksheets to jot down their thoughts. The results will be used to establish character statements on downtown that will inform input from HPB and PC into the Unified Land Used Code (ULUC) project.

PRESENTATIONS:

Staff Presenter: Andrea Mimnaugh, AICP, Senior Planner
Additional Presenter(s): Kim Field, HPB Chair, and Rick Cronenberger, HPB Board Member

Myths, Perceptions and Realities of the Historical

Character of Downtown Littleton.

Survey Results, April 20, 2020

HPB and PC

The intent of this exercise is to objectively evaluate and understand the true character defining aspects of Downtown Littleton. Defining character is exceedingly difficult to do, and it means different things to different people. It includes how one feels, how it invokes personal memories of one's past, feelings of loss of personal memories of one's past, nostalgia of loss, etc.

If this can be synthesized into a defensible document, the City of Littleton will be able to make planning and land use decisions to increase the city property and minimize impacts to the authentic and genuine historic features of Downtown. It will also permit the HPB board to focus on the more significant aspects of preserving the city's heritage and not be bogged down in mundane preservation actions.

If this is successful, and then the outcome should be more recognition of the historic resources and more support by property owners.

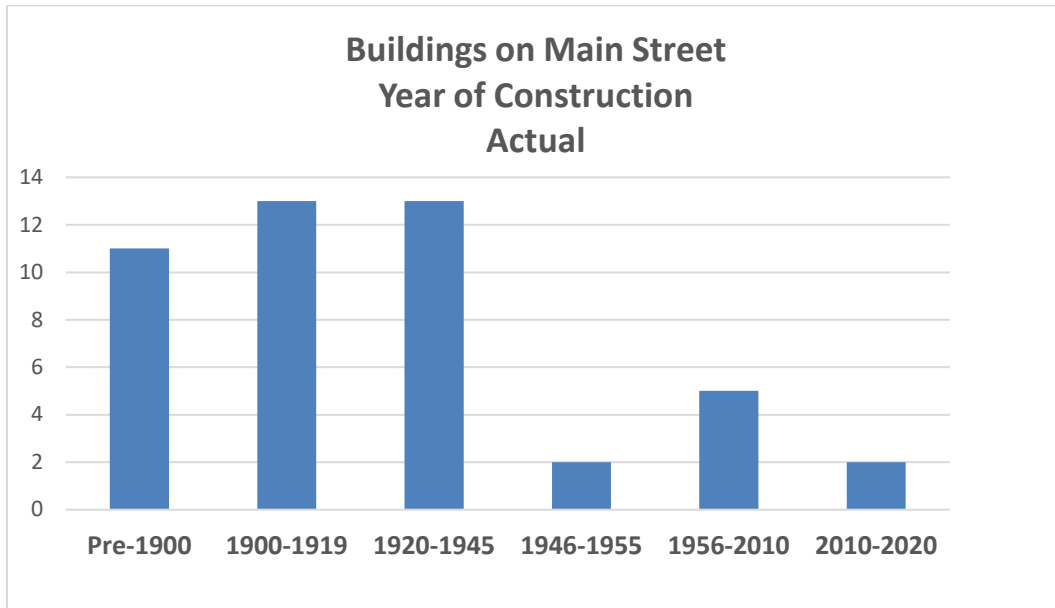


Main Street circa 1912, on left, and present day, on right

Briefly complete each question, bullets, sentences or notes ok. This section pertains to Littleton Downtown Main Street only. The questions are not in any order of importance.

- 1. How would you describe the time period that the buildings on Main Street represent?**

- 1880's to 2018
- Early 20th century
- Late 1800's to early 1900 (Pre-WWII)
- Late quarter of the 19th century to present
- 1890 to 1940's
- Few late 1800's, varying range 1930-1970
- Early 1900's
- On block late 19th century commercial, another block 20th century small town
- East of prince street two lather 20th century buildings.
20% 1900-1920. 25% pre-WWII, 50% post war to present



2. What is the impact of parking on and off the street?

- Provides pedestrian scale, ease of access to commercial, sense of pedestrian activity, urban aesthetic
- Reduces perceived width of street
- Provides pedestrian buffer
- Slows traffic speed
- Efficient use of land
- Lower parking density than parking lots
- Challenging to parallel park at times
- Easier to get to a specific business or restaurant
- Feels quaint to park in front of building

- Elephant in the room
- Visually they go away to our modern eyes
- Hides architectural details
- Larger vehicles block view of the buildings
- Former lot turned into a beer garden, added human element to street
- Increases traffic flow which decreases walkability
- Parking horrible all over, love street front parking on main
- On-street increases congestion, encouraging drivers to circle
- Depends upon the time of day
- Off street parking is not an inconvenience
- Need more efficient solution to off street parking

3. How do you feel about the width of the street?

- Narrower street slows down the traffic, increases pedestrian safety
- Feel safer crossing a narrower street
- Good width
- Sidewalks could be wider in some cases
- Width of street feels standard for the age of the development
- Good for western welcome week and other community activities
- Crowding is part of the story
- If we have to have on-street parking, it is too narrow
- If we do not, there is room for limited traffic, plus pedestrians, outside business activity

Narrowing of the street in late 1990's, (was three lanes) adding cross-walks extensions, slowed down traffic, increase pedestrian safety

4. List the predominant building and landscape materials that are used on the street?

Buildings:

- Building to property edges
- Human scale architecture
- Masonry, Old brick with thin mortar joints, modern brick with regular mortar joints
- Metal elements
- Stucco over brick
- Glass

- Wood and vinyl siding
- Native stones; sandstone, rhyolite, granite, travertine
- Decorative stone
- Wood frame windows and doors
- Fake veneer brick and stone,
- Non-Historic Antique brick
- Styrofoam cornices
- Extruded metal door and window frames
- Terra cotta architectural elements,
- Concrete walls and cornices
- Predominant building materials is brick
- Wood and tin cornices

Landscape:

- What landscaping
- Trees, flowerpots, benches, sign boards, site furnishings, fencing,
- Human scale light pole fixtures with banners.
- Non-historic light poles
- Trash bins, utility elements
- Bits of grass in Bega park
- Tree grates
- Multitude of concrete colors and patching
- Saw cut concrete joints
- Occasional trees
- Deciduous trees, evergreen trees smaller shrubs and annual flowers

5. What is your perception of the pedestrian access and what elements impact that access?

- Sidewalks seem crowded
- What is the “magic” sidewalk section dimension, pick up a few feet of ROW
- Pedestrian site elements that enhance sense of place, seem to compete with one another
- Like crosswalks and blinking lights alert cars to pedestrians needing to cross.
- Crossing street at either end a challenge, east down the hill, west at the corner
- Car and “truck” noise
- Patio seating combined with sidewalk width sometimes limit pedestrian access.

- Patios seating adds charm
- Pedestrian access dampened by traffic flow
- One-way traffic impacts the pedestrian feel of the street
- Pedestrian cross-wall projects increase safety and reduce traffic speed
- Forest of signpost for parking/no parking are impediments to walking,
- Forest of steel
- Non-historic Sternberg lights,
- Walking is easy, wide enough for 5-6 people
- Side streets with Spotty lighting
- Challenge for mobility, strollers, young children
- Constant traffic flow, noise, dust, pollution
- Too many traffic lights, too much time waiting to cross the streets
- Pedestrian access is adequate.

6. What in your viewpoint best describes the historic character of Main Street?

- Pedestrian friendly,
- Tree lined
- Building masses 1 to 3 stories
- Predominately masonry construction
- Front property line construction
- So many historic buildings are preserved
- Pure historic character in downtown is nonexistent.
- Few original building fronts are jewels and well maintained
- Ambience due to low building heights, pushed to street to create intimacy,
- setbacks of upper levels
- Resembles small town from early 20th century
- Brick Buildings
- Continuous brick building blocks
- Historic character is more quaint than historic
- Authentic and not overly designed
- Evolved over time, separated us from pre-planned communities around us
- One block decidedly late 19th century commercial, another block 20th century small town, another block mixed eras
- Mostly authentic pre-WWII
- Fun and energetic place to visit
- Sturdy, the historic character has a sturdy solid character
- 1920's to 1950's feel

- Nevada to Curtice block on south side most original early Littleton feel
- Large store windows and recessed entrances
- Nevada and Main intersection has classic city center orientation, 2 story buildings with diagonal recessed entryways all facing into the intersection
- Unique that it is closed at both ends
- Enter from east on a downhill diagonal, exit west on sharp turn, a closed Piazza feeling.
- Post modern buildings and materials add post WWII commercial feel leading east to Littleton BLVD
- Working Downtown

7. What is the largest building on Main Street?

- Mainstreet Apt, by number of stories, length of façade, 6
- View house Bar and restaurant. 1
- Littleton mixed use (Mayfield Building). 6
- LittleTown- Red Comet Building, 3
- Littleton Town Hall, 1
- Carnegie Library/Melting Pot 1
- Motion/ old Littleton Independent, 1

8. What is your impression of the streetscape character?

- Adds to main streets sense of place
- Widen the pedestrian zone and reduce drive lane widths
- Encourage existing outdoor dining
- More places to sit Benches in sun in winter out of sun summer.
- Explore increasing activities on Alleyways
- Vibrant human scale
- Nice night lighting, Sternberg, tree, and Tivoli lighting
- Charming shade and somewhat narrow sidewalks
- Attractive storefronts create positive character
- Feels like a real downtown, not a fake construct
- Charming character because of scale as perceived by a pedestrian on the street
- Initially appears jumbled and cluttered with all the vertical signpost, light fixtures, telephone poles and trees, street signs, which creates a narrow canyon feeling when driving

- Walking much more intimate with pedestrian scale of building and original building materials
- Cluttered, too many elements from signs to bike racks/public art etc.
- Welcome appealing place to visit with the historic buildings
- Some charm and artistry
- Relatively cohesive and pedestrian friendly albeit auto oriented.
- Authentic one feels that planning has been involved, but not to the point where every element feels generic or overly designed
- New Littleton street signs and placards for businesses, don't fit the historic character at all

9. What are the visual and physical elements that distract from the streetscape?

- Auto oriented projects, with buildings set back from street with parking lots out front, Bradford, Main st and Rick Acres property
- Crowded feeling between café fences and edge of sidewalk
- Street setback from curb inconsistent
- Hodgepodge of signage, public art
- Clutter in front of Melting Pot
- Traffic movement through downtown
- Cars and development with large parking lot on west end of Main street
- Not crazy about the wayfaring signs and color scheme
- Incredible forest of steel signpost, Non-Historic Sternberg lighting, multiple ways to define a parking space
- Store fronts compete due to the difference in building materials and time period
- Power lines and parked cars on the street
- Traffic, big trucks blocking traffic on street/alleys for deliveries.

10. How many new buildings have been constructed and how many buildings have been rehabilitated with additions in the past 30 years on Main Street?

- The vast majority of the buildings on Main Street are either new or rehabilitated
Not sure, but lots of recent development
- 25% new
- Probably almost all of them have been rehabilitated in the last 30 years
- Under 5
- Only 1 constructed, 15 have been rehabilitated
- 10-15 new buildings, 15 have been rehabilitated

- 75% remodeled or added on to
- Most of the rehabilitations have resulted in loss of original building material or original uses.



Veto's Shoe Shop, 1951, left, and today, right

New Buildings:

- Littleton Mixed Use, 2679 W. Main Street
- The Tavern Littleton, 2589 W. Main Street
- Main Street Apartments – East, 2300 W. Main Street
- Main Street Apartments – West, 2350 W. Main Street

Rehabilitated Buildings:

- Skelly Station (Merles/Adelina's)
- Culp Block (Alley Bristlecone, Olde Town Tavern)
- Arapahoe County Courthouse West addition
- Every building on Main Street has been rehabilitated or remodeled in some form except: Details (2359), Wedding Dress Store (2350), the one-story block on south west end (2600-2650) and Bradford Auto Body.
- The following FOUR buildings have had second story additions: LittleTown (Red Comet), Bussard Motors (ViewHouse), Two Potters/Lemke Mkt. (Ancient Art Healing), Skelly Service Station (Merles/Adelitas)

11. What do you like the most and the least about Main Street?

Like

- Active Pedestrian friendly-scale walkability sense of place
- Holiday tree lighting
- Eclectic architecture
- Small independent stores
- The best is authentic and not manufactured with phony cachet
- Variety of restaurants, bars, and shops

- Architecture and walkability
- It is real, eclectic mix of uses
- Access to light rail
- Nice newly rehabilitated buildings, good architecture
- Beautiful unobstructed view of downtown from RR tracks
- 4 blocks of quaint “Gilmore Girls” type of old town
- Charm and vibrancy
- The community events
- Hometown feel with historic buildings and trees
- Small town feeling

Dislike

- Existing auto-oriented developments SW corner of main and Curtice,
- Mainstreet apartments, poor architecture
- U renovated buildings
- The height of the newer construction, does not complement the historic buildings
- Free on street parking
- All the parking/no parking signs
- One-way street
- Hard to find parking
- Littleton Mixed use building
- Clutter

12. What is your biggest concern about preserving Downtown?

- Character of proposed development hopefully compatible with existing downtown character
- No Unified all in Historic District.
- Convincing developers not to tear down historic resources
- Ill proportioned, bad architecture and over density happening all around main street
- Retain the stories, architectural quality, and connection to past generations
- Easy access to businesses for economic viability

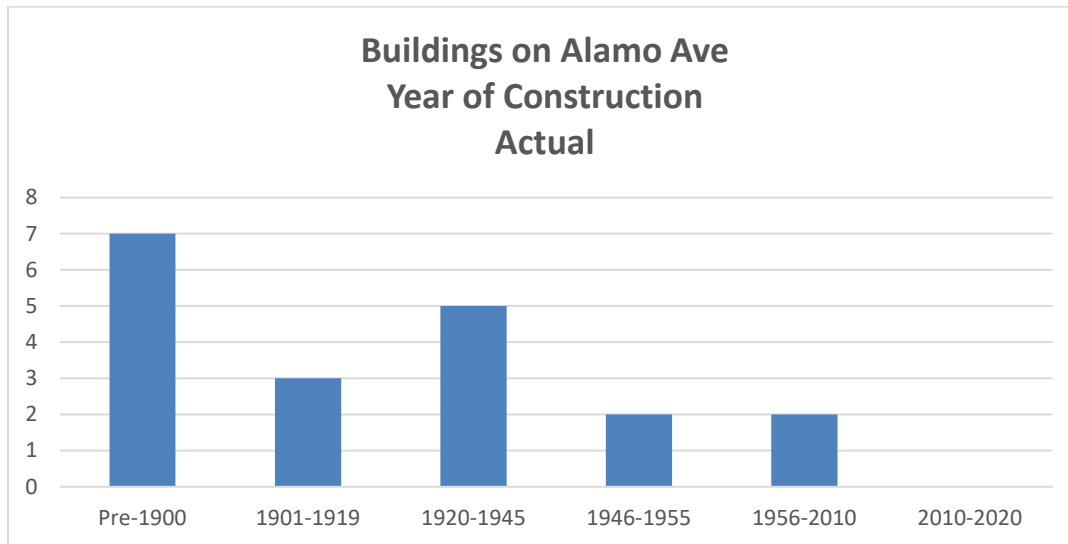
- Height, massing, and façade maintenance
- Main street is protected because it is in a historic district
- A loss or major alteration of contributing buildings
- DT needs to adapt to evolving and growing city to help support the preservation of the historic contributing buildings
- The Opt-in district, some of the most important buildings are not listed in the district
- Preserving buildings outside the district.
- Establishing the other identified downtown historic districts
- Preserve the character we now have, without being too restrictive on property owners
- Challenging economy, ensuring citizens and developers understand that historic preservation is an economic interest
- Redevelop the Space wisely with well-designed density
- Mainly traffic and lack of parking
- How to meet the housing demand that support businesses and add to the character
- Ensuring that new construction mimic or complements the historic ones
- No sure the opt in is the best vehicle for preservation vs a mandatory district
- Downtown is over loved to death

STREETSCAPE DEFINITION: The visual elements of a [street](#), including the road, adjoining buildings, sidewalks, [street furniture](#), signs, lighting, trees and open spaces, etc., that combine to form the street's character.

Briefly complete each question, bullets, sentences or notes ok. This section pertains to Alamo Street only. The questions are not in any order of importance.

13. How would you describe the time period that the buildings on Alamo Street represent?

- Early 1900 to 1990; s
- Late Victorian, early 20th Century residential Queen Anne and craftsmen bungalows
- Modern building with no real style
- Smattering of different eras like Main Street, Original homes, 20's commercial; pre-WW@ and post WW2, Modern Urban renewal
- Late 1800's and early 1900's
- Earliest era of Littleton
- More scatter than Main street
- Assume it was originally residential then became commercial when made one-way street, the building either torn down new buildings built
- Alamo represents the most original and authentic area of Littleton, dating from the 1900 to 1950's
- Alamo is more old time Littleton, late 19th and early 20th century, great character of the street
- Real mish mash, Some authentic buildings from 19ty century, some regrettable buildings from late 1980's
- Predominantly 20th century



14. What is the impact of parking on and off the street?

- Off street parking lots along Alamo are gaps that disrupt the building rhythm.
- Single loaded on street parking interrupted frequently off-street parking lot access
- Hard to parallel park
- Not a big deal
- On-street parking fine and separated by a tree lawn
- Hard to make a left turn or cross the street.
- Traffic moves fast
- Large surface parking which are detrimental to the feeling of activity on the street.
- Parking does not feel as congested as on main street
- The slightly narrow street, constant 20-foot building set back and mature tree canopy reduces congested feeling
- Parking hard throughout all Littleton
- Visibility is a challenge in some spots
- Probably appropriate given smaller number of retail establishments
- View house parking lot is ugly
- Street seems all about parking and getting through town.

15. How do you feel about the width of the street?

- Appears to be a narrower street section than Main Street
- Designed to move cars faster
- Expand south to pick up additional parallel parking, could result in a similar street character as Main Street
- Good width, not sure how it could be made wider
- Fine
- Frequent pedestrian crossings discourage speeding
- Sidewalks could be wider
- Do not make it wider

16. List the predominant building and landscape materials that are used on the street?

Building

- Brick masonry
- Lap siding CMU masonry
- Stone, rhyolite stone
- Wood clapboard siding
- Concrete
- Frame buildings
- Stucco

Landscape

- Sporadic trees
- Decorative light poles
- Turf
- Large mature trees
- Residential scale landscaping
- Mix of shrubs and trees
- Metal fences

17. What is your perception of the pedestrian access and what elements impact that access?

- Needs improvement
- Narrow sidewalks
- Curb cuts into surface lots
- Some existing buildings have raised porches/stoops which limit access
- Building entries confusing, not facing alamo
- Cars, blinking cross walks protect pedestrians
- Light rails and buses provide additional pedestrian access
- Decent
- Need side street connection to Main Street
- Feels less walkable than Main Street
- Sidewalks feel narrower

- Hard to cross the street, see around the parked cars
- One-way nature of the street makes the pedestrian environment less safe
- Very good with sidewalk separation
- Street crossings good
- Isn't really inviting as a street to stroll down – geared more toward auto traffic than pedestrians
- Less Pedestrian friendly
- Adequate

18. What in your viewpoint best describes the historic character of Alamo Street?

- Mixed – some late 19th century residential, along with mid-century
- Anchored by post office and bank on the east.
- Appears the original development is residential
- Feels like a historic street should feel, until you hit the blue plastic fence
- More of a mixture than main street
- Several 20th century houses
- Mid-century elks and 1980's ACC
- Picturesque and intact
- Historic residences retain their historic integrity
- Modest (Victorian) homes turned into commercial spaces
- Quaint
- Really expresses the town's character, a mix of uses (residential, commercial, manufacturing, fraternal lodges) and eras that is authentic
- Green spaces in former front yards
- A very special feeling unlike anyplace in Littleton,
- It looked very similar 80 years ago, very little change
- Retains the original urban residential and industrial feeling that occurs due to the RR spur and Littles Creek
- The Corner of Rapp and Alamo is the most original pre 1900-1930 area of Littleton downtown

19. What is the biggest building on Alamo Street?

- ACC (6), Predominantly 2 story. Chase Bank
- Post office

- Elks Building
- Elks or Post office

20. What is your impression of the streetscape character?

- Does not have the same street character as Main Street
- Lacks site amenities and features found on Main street
- Like the way it is kept up, people appreciate their historic buildings and maintain them
- Nice on east end, falls apart on east end with ugly parking lots, post office fencing and ACC
- Sidewalks could be wider, tree lawns suffer from a lot of pedestrian traffic
- Shorter buildings, narrower sidewalks and trees compared to Main Street
- Little Yard associated with the older homes
- No concept of a defined streetscape
- More trees than Mainstreet
- Feels like an old sleepy town area
- Trees perhaps the most significant elements, and most vulnerable
- Too many parking/no parking signs on street
- Variety of buildings add sidewalk character
- Trees tie the street together

21. What are the visual and physical elements that distract from the streetscape?

- Fences, unmaintained and inconsistent tree lawn, curb cuts, narrow sidewalks
- Vita at the east end on Littleton BLVD
- Post office fencing
- Ugly parking lots on east end
- Varied building, setbacks
- Large Parking lots, (Post office, Elks,)
- Tiny windows on ACC building
- Large Buildings
- Crowded and cramped,
- Not enjoyable to walk, actually very pretty.
- Proliferation of parking/no parking signs
- Concrete in front of old store fronts

- Depends on what is intended, quasi-residential street, trees of, retail street, trees are a distraction

22. How many new buildings have been constructed and how many buildings have been rehabilitated in the past 30 years on Alamo Street?

- No new construction in 30 years
- 20% new, 60% remodeled or added onto.
- Some houses have been rehabilitated
- Commercial buildings not rehabilitated
- Less Construction than on Main Street
- Probably most of the historic buildings have been rehabilitated in 30 years
- 2626 South Alamo is the only building to have been so severely altered and lost its historic significance.
- 75% of the buildings rehabilitated, Vandels antiques 2 years ago
- Barrister Building restored?
- +/- 5 Rehabilitations

23. What do you like the most and the least about Alamo Street?

Like

- Alamo seems like a street in transition
- Some of the existing houses well proportioned with quality materials and detailing
- Historic houses used as businesses
- Residential, older, nice commercial buildings
- Parking is generally available on Alamo
- All the representations of Littleton from grand houses to Brutalist to Elks Addition
- The trees and it canopy
- The urban/suburban interface and relationships of the building to the street
- Generally, feels quiet and could be better integrated to Main Street

Dislike

- More like a thoroughfare than a pedestrian friendly street
- Gaps created by the surface lots
- ACC is not compatible with the character of Downtown
- Ugly parking lots
- Lack of pedestrian activity on the street
- Visual large parking lots, (and yet, they are necessary)
- Roaring thoroughfare, feels like it has been sacrificed to traffic
- One Way traffic
- Love/hate relationships with the parking lots

24. What is the character of Alamo Avenue that differentiates it from Main Street's character?

- Single loaded parallel parking
- Buildings set back from the sidewalk edge
- Narrower sidewalks
- Lack of consistent tree lawn
- Gaps in development
- More intact than main street
- Not as many businesses and less business density
- Residential feel
- Inconsistent building setbacks
- Simply a way for people to drive through Littleton
- Neighborhood-killing thoroughfare
- Residential and smaller commercial buildings
- Public and institutional buildings, Post office, Elks ACC
- Large variety of architectural styles, Victorian to Mid-century
- Quaint, more walkable and user friendly
- Not as unified, sides of buildings, not fronts
- Not as dense makes it feel fragmented

25. What is your biggest concern about preserving the character of Alamo street south to Church Street?

- IMO JD Hill General Store and Post Office the only significant architecture along Alamo
- some existing significant homes (They could be relocated)

- New construction in the empty lots would be incompatible with the historic street character
- Great danger of massive housing units being built once north of Main Street built out
- If revised massing and better design standards not put into place, it will not be a pretty situation
- South of Alamo no consistent character, with mix of large office buildings, standalone commercial, large residential and industrial buildings
- Poorly maintained parking lots
- Not taking full advantage of the RTD station at the east end
- Is there Character? Looks rundown like property owners waiting for development opportunities
- Residential style buildings remaining to reveal the streets original use
- Seems like almost half the buildings have been already lost
- Nice to replace surface parking with active use, does not necessarily have to look residential in order to fit in
- The loss of any of these buildings
- The corner of Rapp and Alamo is the most unique small town feel area of the city, defines the original feeling from the early to mid-20th century
- New buildings need to be designed to protect the existing feeling
- Old places being bought up and replaced
- A voluntary opt-in district is not the best vehicle for preservation

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